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R U R A L D I S T R I C T O F E L Y

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A N N U A L R E P O R T

for the year

1963

by

K. S. MAURICE - SMITH  
M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.  
Medical Officer of Health

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Telephone: ELY 2678

Etheldreda House,  
35 St. Mary's Street,  
ELY, Cambs.



THE RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL OF ELY.

J. E. WARD  
CLERK OF THE COUNCIL  
W. PARR  
DEPUTY CLERK

ALL COMMUNICATIONS SHOULD  
BE ADDRESSED TO THE CLERK  
OF THE COUNCIL

WP/JEP/32  
Enclosure

RURAL COUNCIL OFFICES,  
LYNN ROAD,  
ELY, CAMBS.

28th September, 1964.

*RECEIVED  
29 SEP 1964*

Sir,

Annual Report of Medical Officer of  
Health - Year 1963

In accordance with paragraph 9 of Ministry of Health Circular 1/64, I forward four copies of the Council's Medical Officer's Annual Report for the year 1963.

I am, Sir,  
Your obedient Servant,

*J. E. Ward*  
Clerk of the Council.

The Secretary,  
Ministry of Health,  
Alexander Fleming House,  
Elephant and Castle,  
LONDON, S.E.1.



ELY RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit my Annual Report for the year ended 31st December, 1963.

1. STATISTICS :

During 1963 the usual statistics have been kept and are available. Population (1961 Census) 14,442.

2. GENERAL HEALTH SERVICES :

(a) Ambulances.- Two ambulances are stationed at Ely, both being operated by the Isle of Ely County Council.

The Littleport St.John Ambulance continues to work under the agency agreement with the County Council. This vehicle, which serves the local area, and those areas adjoining when necessary, continues to be of the greatest value.

St.John Ambulance Brigade members in Littleport still man and run the Ambulance in that village.

Unfortunately, St.John members in Ely give only occasional assistance. The toll of age is partly the cause for this, and also the disinterestedness of the younger generation in voluntary public work of this character.

(b) Nursing and Clinic Arrangements.- Clinic arrangements continue as in previous years.

The services of the District Nurses and Midwives continue as in previous years. At times, much of their grand work is taken for granted by the public. Many, however, I am glad to say, do appreciate their services.

(c) Hospitals.-

(i) Tower Hospital for Chronic Sick.

(ii) St.John's Hospital for Infectious Diseases and long-stay cases.

(iii) The Grange Maternity Home.- These three Hospitals are under the control of the Regional Hospital Board.

I would wish to draw the attention of all Mothers-to-be to the efficiency, skill and kindness that will be put at their disposal at a very important time in their lives, if they enter the Grange.

3. WATER :

(a) Following the setting-up of the Water Board in 1962, the Council has had no responsibilities for the water supply to the District.

It is, however, very satisfactory to note that during the year work has started on the new low-level reservoir in Ely, which must benefit the whole area.

Every year sees an increasing number of houses being built, which, together with an additional number of conversions from E.C.s to W.C.s in the villages, increases steadily the demands on the supply of water.



3. WATER (contd.)

No unsatisfactory chemical or bacteriological analyses of the water in the district have been reported to me.

The water has no plumbo-solvent action.

The Council, after due consideration, did not feel that it could recommend fluoridation of the water supply. I must point out that for years the rural population has been drinking water containing some natural fluoride without any of the dire results which are talked about. There is no evidence that the addition of a further small quantity will endanger the life or health of anyone. With the greatest respect, and having regard to all the evidence available, I must note my regret at the Council's decision.

4. SEWAGE :

(a) Work on the various sewerage improvement projects in the District has gone on steadily throughout the year.

(b) (i) Mepal Scheme

Work on this Scheme commenced early in 1963. By the end of the year it was in the final stages of completion.

(ii) Little Downham Scheme

During the year the plans for this Scheme were finalized and the Ministry's Inquiry early in 1964 was awaited.

(iii) Haddenham Scheme

Following the Ministry's Inquiry, approval was subsequently received. It is hoped that the Council will be able to go to tender early in the New Year.

(iv) Littleport Scheme

A very considerable amount of inquiry and research has been found necessary with reference to this Scheme, which is not only to enlarge and improve the present Disposal Works, but also to remedy the infiltration of sub-soil water.

(v) Witchford Scheme

Early in the year, the Council received the Minister's approval, and I am happy to record, work on this Scheme commenced on the 1st October.

(vi) Stretham Scheme

The work in this Village was completed by December 1963.

(vii) Coveney & Wilburton Schemes

During the year, work on the plans for these two Schemes was continued. Inquiries by the Minister are expected during the earlier part of 1964.

(c) 1963 was a year of steady and satisfactory progress in the modernization of sewage disposal Schemes in the villages.

I am sure that the Council can look back on the year with a feeling of satisfaction.



5. HOUSING :

(a) Permanent Housing

No. of dwellings completed during 1963	21
No. of dwellings provided under Housing Acts to 31st December 1963	1586
No. of dwellings under construction at 31st December 1963	24
No. of pre-war Council houses improved during 1963 by the provision of standard amenities as defined in the House Purchase and Housing Act, 1959, i.e. bath in bathroom, wash-hand basin, hot water supply, water closet and foodstore.	28
No. under improvement at 31st December 1963	36
No. of pre-war Council houses so improved since commencement of scheme in 1958	233

Temporary Housing

No. of converted ex-service huts occupied at 31st December 1963	1
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Slum Clearance

No. of Demolition Orders and Closing Orders made - and Undertakings withdrawing Unfit Dwellings from Use for Human Habitation accepted - during 1963	22
No. of families rehoused by Council from unfit dwellings (including converted ex-service huts) during 1963	24

(b) Private Enterprise

New Permanent Houses

No. of dwellings completed during 1963	40
No. of dwellings completed since April 1945	457
No. of dwellings under construction at 31st December 1963	27

Subsidised Provision and Improvement of Dwellings

Housing (Financial Provisions) Act, 1958:  
Section 46 - New Dwellings for Agricultural Workers - £10 or £15 per annum for 40 years from Completion

No. of dwellings completed during 1963	NIL *
No. of dwellings completed since 1945	41 *
No. of dwellings completed since 1938 (commencement of scheme)	69

\*These figures are included in numbers under heading 'New Permanent Houses' above.

Housing (Financial Provisions) Act, 1958  
Section 30 - Dwellings Improved or Provided by Conversion of Buildings with aid of Discretionary Improvement Grant

No. of dwellings improved or provided - and amount of grant paid - during 1963	8 £2,489.14.10d.
No. of dwellings improved or provided - and amount of grant paid - since 1949 (commencement of scheme)	192 £47,483. 0. 0d.



5. HOUSING (contd.)

House Purchase and Housing Act, 1959  
Section 4 - Dwellings Improved by Provision  
of Standard Amenities (as specified above)  
with aid of Standard Grant

No. of dwellings improved - and amount of grant paid - during 1963	42 £5,501.10. 6d.
No. of dwellings improved - and amount of grant paid - since 1959 (commencement of scheme)	231 £29,685.14. 0d.

Council Housing

The trend towards increasing the accommodation for the elderly continued, and the provision of old peoples bungalows is taking pride of place in the list of new housing projects.

I have no doubt that there are many aged people who fully appreciate the new bungalows allotted to them. I constantly hear expressions of their thanks, and I am quite sure that the comfort and the amenities available are adding in no small measure to the happiness and health of these old folk in the sunset of their lives.

6. SCHOOLS :

I have no comments to make.

7. MILK :

The Milk (Special Designations) (Specified Areas) Order, operating since April 1959, is still in force. This Order prohibits the retail sale of raw milk unless it carries the special designation "Tuberculin Tested" under the Milk (Special Designation) Regulations, 1960.

8. INFECTIOUS DISEASES :

(a) 517 notifications of infectious diseases were received. The total being made up as follows:-

Measles ..	..	..	..	..	..	506
Pneumonia ..	..	..	..	..	..	6
Scarlet Fever ..	..	..	..	..	..	4
Whooping Cough ..	..	..	..	..	..	1
						<hr/>
						517

Although the incidence of measles in the District was very high, the character of this disease was, happily, of a mild nature, and complications, of which there can be many serious types, were very infrequent.

(b) Yet another year has gone, without a case of diphtheria in the District. In my earlier years in practice I saw very many cases of this horrible and killing disease. I am, therefore, more than thankful to report its absence from the Rural District. I would make a very forceful appeal to all parents to have their families efficiently immunized in childhood. Immunization against diphtheria, polio-myelitis and some other infectious diseases can be carried out either by General Practitioners or at County Council Clinics.

(c) Tuberculosis

1 new case was notified during the year. After making the necessary adjustments there are now the following numbers on the Register:-

<u>Respiratory</u>	<u>Non-Respiratory</u>
Females 26	6
Males 37	1

Compared with 1962, the total figure shows an increase of 1 case.



## 9. FOOD :

(a) The following is a list of food handling premises in the area:-

Butchers ..	..	..	..	..	..	12
Bakers ..	..	..	..	..	..	5
Fried Fish Shops ..	..	..	..	..	..	3
Confectioners ..	..	..	..	..	..	5
Cafes ..	..	..	..	..	..	5
Licensed Premises ..	..	..	..	..	..	43
Greengrocers & General Food Stores ..	..	..	..	..	..	52
Chemists ..	..	..	..	..	..	4

(b) 62 premises are registered for storage and sale of ice-cream. There is no ice cream manufactured for sale in the area.

Milk distributors and Dairies registered under the Milk & Dairies (General) Regulations, 1959 = 5.

### Food Hygiene

More inspections of food-handling premises were carried out during the year, as the result of the increased Staff in the Public Health Department. All the same, there is very much work as yet to be done, before the standards of food-handling throughout the District attain the standard that I am sure they should. One visit to given premises is insufficient to ensure a continued high standard.

When handling food - dirty hands and dirty habits are not just revolting from the point of view of good taste (in more senses than one!) - they can also easily transmit diseases of a highly dangerous character, which can endanger the community at large. After all, there are none of us who before shaking hands with a friend, would deliberately spit on our own hands. Why, therefore, should we indulge in an equally disgusting habit, such as licking our fingers when handling food which we intend to offer to our friend to eat.

Every credit is due to those employers and their assistants who practice practical food hygiene in their shops and stores. I wish it was possible to mention them by name.

### Unsound Food

Butchers meat at slaughterhouses .. .. .. 5 st. 1 lb.

No other foodstuffs were found to be unfit for human consumption.

## 10. MISCELLANEOUS :

(a) Rodent Control

During the year the Public Health Inspector and the Rodent Officer have done 449 domestic house and business premises and 162 agricultural premises inspections and 649 and 20 treatments and re-treatments respectively have been carried out.

(b) Moveable Dwellings

A very considerable amount of work has been done by the Department during the year on problems arising from caravans etc. The position has improved enormously over the past year or two, and I am hopeful that in the next year or eighteen months, I shall be able to report that all is satisfactory.

### Licensed Caravan Sites

Multiple Residential Sites ..	..	..	..	7
Single Caravan Sites ..	..	..	..	37
Itinerary (Tipsters etc.) ..	..	..	..	7



10. MISCELLANEOUS (contd.)

(c) Factories Act

There is one large factory and two smaller ones in the District. During the next couple of years a detailed survey of the whole District will be necessary, and I shall be reporting to the Council thereon, in due course.

A further increase in the Department's responsibilities in the near future will be inspections under the recent Offices, Shops & Railway Premises Act, 1963.

(d) Slaughter-houses

On the 1st October, 1963, the Meat Inspection Regulations, 1963, came into force. *Inter alia*, these Regulations require a more rigid standard of meat inspection. Not only must inspected and approved carcasses etc., be distinctly marked, but 100% inspections of all slaughterings is essential. Failure to maintain 100% inspections requires that the Council shall, on each occasion of failure, notify the Ministry. The Council is empowered to levy a charge within a defined scale, for these inspections.

Number of animals slaughtered .. .. ..	299
Number of carcasses inspected .. .. ..	224

(e) Clean Air

Generally speaking, no specific problems arose during the year.

The position regarding Diesel fumes remains unchanged. Daily, motor vehicles (lorries, vans, buses etc.) rush around the countryside spewing forth black clouds of highly offensive, filthy and carcinogenic smoke. During the year, I cannot recall the report of any action taken to remedy this state of affairs.

(f) Refuse Collection

A Dennis Paxit 11 came into operation during the early part of January, and has proved to be a most useful addition to the existing vehicles. The compaction provided by this vehicles meant larger loads could be handled between runs to the tip, and the unhygienic aspects of side loading are gradually disappearing.

(g) Office Accommodation

With the very limited space available in the main office building, it was found necessary to obtain other accommodation for the Public Health Inspector. It was fortunate that rooms were available nearby for temporary use. It was then found possible to build up the records necessary for the effective running of the Department.

11. PERSONAL :

I offer my great thanks, as always, to my colleagues - Mr. J. E. Ward, the Clerk, and to Mr. Walter Parr the Deputy Clerk, and Mr. Arnold Cross, Chief Public Health Inspector.

Mr. Clifford Jones and his Staff have always been available to give me advice and help whenever I have been in need.

Mr. E. Ramsden, who was appointed as Additional Public Health Inspector on 2nd April, 1962, resigned at the end of January 1963. He was a very efficient and pleasant colleague and I wish him the best of luck in his new appointment.



11. PERSONAL (contd.)

Mr.D.J.Gwynn was appointed as Additional Public Health Inspector on the 6th May, 1963, He is a most excellent successor to Mr.Ramsden, and I am delighted to have him on the Staff.

I have the honour to be, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

K. S. MAURICE-SMITH

Medical Officer of Health,  
Ely Rural District Council.

